

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY ROME

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF ISRAEL
PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE LAST DAY OF
HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 13:

PRIME MINISTER RABIN: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A GOOD AFTER-
NOON.

I FIRST WOULD LIKE TO THANK PRESIDENT FORD, THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR EXTENDING AN OFFICIAL INVITATION
TO ME TO COME TO THIS CITY AND TO DISCUSS WITH HIM AND WITH
SECRETARY KISSINGER, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER, AND
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY SIMON THE WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES
THAT WE HAVE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADD THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT FOR TAKING SO
MUCH OF HIS TIME, HAVING THREE WORKING MEETINGS WITH ME,
IN WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS IN DEPTH ALL THE ISSUES
THAT ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE GOT IN COMMON VIS-A-
VIS THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON A BILATERAL BASIS.

AS YOU KNOW, ISRAEL'S POLICY WAS, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

OF ITS CREATION, TO SEEK PEACE -- TO SEEK PEACE WITH
SECURITY.

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ON THE OTHER HAND, ISRAEL, ALL THE TIME, WANTED TO BE
INDEPENDENT WHEN IT COMES TO ITS CAPABILITY TO DEFEND
ITSELF, BY ITSELF.

I BELIEVE THAT DURING THIS DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT,
WE HAVE REACHED UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE NEED TO CONTINUE
THE SEARCH FOR THE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND WE HAVE
REACHED UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THEIR ONGOING MILITARY RELA-
TIONSIPS IN A CONCRETE WAY, AND WITH CONCRETE RESULTS.

I WOULD SAY THAT ON OTHER ISSUES, WE HAVE EXCHANGED VIEWS
IN REGARD TO ECONOMIC AID, IN REGARD TO MANY OTHER ISSUES
THAT THE MIDDLE EAST WILL FACE, AND ISRAEL HAS GOT

INTEREST.

IN THE MEETINGS WITH SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER WE WENT AT LENGTH INTO ALL THE ISSUES, INCLUDING THE ISSUES OF EMIGRATION OF MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SYRIAN-JEWISH COMMUNITY.

I THINK THAT AS AN OPENING STATEMENT, IT IS ENOUGH, AND IF YOU HAVE GOT QUESTIONS, I WILL TRY TO ANSWER THEM.

Q. (PARAPHRASE -- WHY WAS THERE NO JOINT COMMUNIQUE?)

A. WELL, I'LL TELL YOU QUITE FRANKLY, I HAVEN'T ASKED FOR ONE. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE A TRADITION, WHILE THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL IS IN WASHINGTON, TO HAVE A COMMON COMMUNIQUE.

WE PREFERRED TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES. WE PREFERRED TO DEAL PRACTICALLY WITH ALL THE SUBJECTS, RATHER THAN TO ISSUE A COMMUNIQUE.

Q. WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT A CONFERENCE ... FOREIGN MINISTERS, MILITARY RELATIONSHIP ... DID YOU MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT ISRAEL IS SATISFIED WITH THE DEGREE OF AMERICAN SUPPLIES ... IN THE SENSE OF THE REQUEST THAT WAS MADE?

A. I WOULDN'T LIKE TO GO INTO DETAILS, BUT I THINK THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE WORDS THAT I HAVE USED, SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

Q. (PARAPHRASE -- WILL NEGOTIATIONS NEXT BE ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE OR ON THE JORDANIAN SIDE?)

A. WELL, I BELIEVE THAT THIS MATTER IS BETTER TO BE LEFT FOR FURTHER EXPLORATIONS, AND WE WILL DECIDE ABOUT IT LATER ON.

Q. OH, DO YOU HAVE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES ON THAT?

A. WELL, I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE WAY THAT WE HAVE TO PURSUE IN THE EFFORTS TO MOVE NOW FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION TOWARD PEACE.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT BETWEEN YOU AND THE PRESIDENT ON THIS FRONT -- THE NEXT STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE?

A. I DIDN'T SAY SO.

Q. (PARAPHRASE -- WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FURTHER EXPLORATION?)

A. WELL AS I HAVE SAID, THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT PREFERENCE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THERE SHOULD BE MUCH MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER -- IN EXPLORING, FURTHERMORE WHAT WILL BE THE BEST OPTION.

Q. (INAUDIBLE).

A. WELL IF YOU FOLLOW WHAT ISRAEL HAS SAID SINCE WE REACHED THE DISENGAGEMENT -- WE WERE THE PARTY, OR ONE OF THE PARTIES THAT STRESSED THAT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS DURABLE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THEREFORE, THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IS ONE ISSUE AND THE STRENGTHENING OF ISRAEL IS A DIFFERENT ONE. AND ONE HAS TO LOOK AT THEM AS A PARALLEL -- RATHER THAN LINKED TOGETHER.

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Q. MR. MINISTER ... HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE PROGRESS ON THE CIVILIAN ASPECTS OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA?

A. WELL TO THE EXTENT THAT WE KNOW -- WHEN IT COMES TO EGYPT, WE SEE THAT THERE IS A LOT OF WORK WHICH IS CARRIED OUT IN CLEANING AND CLEARING THE SUEZ CANAL ZONE FOR SHIPPING -- AND WE SEE ALSO, ACTIVITIES IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CITIES.

THERE IS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CITIES AND THE COMING BACK OF THE POPULATION.

WHEN IT COMES TO SYRIA, I WOULD SAY THAT THERE IS NO EFFORT BEING DONE TO RECONSTRUCT QUINETRA AND MOST OF THE VILLAGES IN THE BUFFER ZONE.

AND PRACTICALLY, THERE IS NO CIVILIAN ACTIVITY IN THAT AREA.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE OTHER PARTS OF THE BULGE THAT WAS TAKEN DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR AND WAS EVACUATED BY US -- THEY RETURNED MOST OF THE CIVILIANS.

I BELIEVE THAT THE DIFFERENCE HAS CERTAIN SIGNIFICANCE.

Q. (PARAPHRASE -- CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU DISCUSSED WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER ABOUT THE QUESTION OF JEWS IN SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION?)

A. WELL, I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO DETAILS. AS YOU CAN

IMAGINE, FOR ISRAEL, IT IS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A JEWISH STATE TO DO WHATEVER IS POSSIBLE TO HELP JEWISH COMMUNITIES WHEN THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTERTAIN THE BASIC RIGHTS -- ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE THEY ARE JEWS -- AND I DON'T BELIEVE IT WILL BE ADVISABLE TO GO INTO DETAIL.

Q. (PARAPHRASE -- CAN YOU CONFIRM SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLIES HAVE RESUMED TO EGYPT?)
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A. WELL, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS A RESUMPTION OF RUSSIAN SUPPLIES TO EGYPT. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPLIES GO BEYOND SPARE PARTS AND ... HERE AND THERE SOME ITEMS, ... I DON'T KNOW YET.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR LEISURELY EXPLORATION?)

A. WELL, TIME IS AN OBJECTIVE ELEMENT. IT DEPENDS ON HOW THEY USE IT. BUT, BASICALLY, ISRAEL WAS, AND IS, READY TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE.

I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE STATED TIME AND AGAIN THAT AFTER THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA, AND THE FACT THAT WE HAVE A CEASE-FIRE WITH JORDAN AND LEBANON, THE ONLY MOVEMENT THAT ISRAEL CONSIDERS IS A MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE.

THE ISSUE IS NOT WITHDRAWAL. THE ISSUE IS HOW TO MOVE FROM WAR TO PEACE.

THE QUESTION OF TERRITORIES WILL BECOME PART OF THE PROBLEMS OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE, BUT FROM HERE, WE WILL DEAL IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS IN MOVING FROM DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS FROM CEASE-FIRE TOWARDS PEACE.

Q. MR. PRIME MINISTER, WHEN YOU SAY ISRAEL HAS A PREFERENCE AS TO THE NEXT STAGE -- THE PREFERENCE REGARDING WHICH FRONT -- DOES THAT PREFERENCE -- IS THAT PREFERENCE TWO THRUSTS AT THE SAME TIME?

A. WELL I THINK THAT IF SOMEBODY REALLY WANTS TO KNOW, TO MOVE TOWARDS PEACE, IT HAS BEEN PROVED, SINCE THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1948 -- WHEN WE STARTED NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT AN ARMISTICE -- UNTIL TODAY -- THAT THE BEST WAY IS TO NEGOTIATE ON A BILATERAL BASIS. AND ONCE YOU SUCCEED TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT WITH ONE OF THE COUNTRIES, WHILE THE OTHER KNOWING THAT YOU ARE READY LATER ON TO MOVE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM -- AND TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT WITH THEM
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-- THIS IS THE BEST SOLUTION.

ANY ATTEMPT OF MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS PROVED TO BE A COMPLETE FAILURE AND AN INVITATION TO RETURN TO THE KIND OF RHETORICS THAT THE MIDDLE EAST IS SO MUCH ACQUAINTED WITH.

Q. MR. MINISTER: I HAVE A TWO PART QUESTION:

SINCE THE ARREST AND INDICTMENT OF ARCHBISHOP CAPUCCI THERE ARE REPORTS OF CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON YOUR GOVERNMENT FROM SUCH CHURCH GROUPS AS THE VATICAN AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, CAN YOU GIVE US DETAILS ON THIS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT YOUR GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO BOW TO THIS PRESSURE AND ARREST NO MORE PRIESTS -- IMPORTING GUNS AND BOMBS

A. WELL, EVERYONE WHO WILL TRY TO SMUGGLE GUNS, EXPLOSIVES, ESPECIALLY IN CONNECTION WITH TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, WILL BE DEALT WITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW -- REGARDLESS OF WHAT IS HIS POSITION.

AND THEREFORE, ARCHBISHOP CAPUCCI WILL BE TRIED IN THE WAY THAT EVERYONE WILL BE TRIED. HE IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURT, AND I DON'T BELIEVE IT IS ADVISABLE FOR ME, ONCE HIS CASE IS TAKEN UP -- TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

Q. MR. PRIME MINISTER, IN THE PAST YOU HAVE INDICATED YOUR PREFERENCE FOR DEALING WITH EGYPT IN THE NEXT PHASE. IS YOUR POSITION STILL THE SAME? OR DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE FRUITFUL TO DEAL WITH JORDAN NOW?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE IT WILL BE USEFUL AT THIS STAGE TO GO INTO DETAILS -- WHAT CAN BE DONE AND WHAT CANNOT BE DONE.

IF YOU JUDGE THE PROSPECTS OF MOVING TOWARDS PEACE BY STATEMENTS OF ARAB LEADERS -- ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS -- ONE CAN BE COMPLETELY DISAPPOINTED.

BUT WITHOUT IGNORING THESE STATEMENTS, I THINK THAT THE BEST WAY IS TO EXPLORE IT IN A VERY PRACTICAL AND SOME-
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TIMES A TRUE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL -- MAINLY WHEN IT COMES TO ISRAEL, THROUGH THE UNITED STATES -- AND ONLY THEN TO MAKE A JUDGMENT.

Q. MR. PRIME MINISTER, HAVE YOU TALKED WITH THE PRESIDENT ABOUT FURTHER AMERICAN SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL?

A. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU MEAN BY "SECURITY GUARANTEES". WHAT ISRAEL HAS ASKED THE UNITED STATES IS TO ALLOW US TO GET THEIR ARMS -- THE ARMS THAT WILL MAKE ISRAEL CAPABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF, BY ITSELF.

I CAN'T RECALL THAT ISRAEL HAS EVER ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO COMMIT ITSELF IN TERMS OF SENDING TROOPS TO OUR HELP. WE HAVE NEVER ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO DO SO AND WE DON'T ASK YOU TODAY.

Q. WHEN YOU LEFT -- THE LAST TIME, YOU WERE VERY CONFIDENT OF THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION THEN IN POWER. DO YOU LEAVE WITH THE SAME CONFIDENCE THIS TIME?

A. WELL, I LEAVE WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT THERE IS A DEEP UNDERSTANDING TO OUR PROBLEMS, THAT THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE STRENGTH OF ISRAEL IS ESSENTIAL, NOT ONLY FOR ISRAEL BUT FOR THE PURSUIT OF THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THAT MUCH WILL BE DONE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

Q. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE EGYPTIANS?

A. WELL, AS I SAID, THERE WILL BE NO MOVEMENT IN TERMS OF JUST WE GIVING BACK TERRITORIES.

THE MOVEMENT SHOULD BE TOWARD PEACE. IT SHOULD BE FROM A STATE OF WAR TO SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT WAR; THAT IS TO

SAY, NON-BELLIGERENCY.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: DOESN'T YOUR PROFESSION FOR BILATERAL TALKS RULE OUT A RETURN TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?)

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A. WELL, THE WAY THAT I SEE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IT IS A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THERE ARE FLEXIBLE WAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS -- THE MAIN PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO BRING ABOUT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS. IN THE ABSENCE OF READINESS ON THE PART OF THE OTHERS TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH US, IT MUST BE DONE THROUGH A THIRD PARTY, PREFERABLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. AND ONCE THE SITUATION IS RIPE, WHEN UNDERSTANDING IS REACHED -- THEN TO MOVE FOR THE LAST PHASE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

I CAN GIVE YOU AS AN EXAMPLE -- THE WAY IT WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL. WHEN ALMOST EVERYTHING WAS WORKED OUT -- THEN THE TWO COMMISSIONS MOVED TO GENEVA AND CONTINUED THE FINAL STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND AN AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS PROCEDURE WILL BE THE BEST IF IT'S POSSIBLE -- IF ONE IS REALLY EAGER TO MOVE TOWARDS PEACE.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: TO CLARIFY, ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE NEXT STEP OF AN AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN EGYPTIAN PLEDGE OF NON-BELLIGERENCY?)

A. I PUT IT THIS WAY:

JUST WITHDRAWAL IS NOT AN ISSUE THAT WE ARE GOING TO NEGOTIATE IN THE NEXT PHASE.

IN FOCUSING ON THE PURPOSE OF MOVEMENT FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION IS MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE -- AND IN TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE, YOU HAVE TWO OPTIONS:

EITHER TO MOVE BY ONE ACT FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION TOWARDS AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT, WHICH I DON'T BELIEVE THE ARAB COUNTRIES ARE READY FOR TODAY.

YOU HAVE HEARD STATEMENTS BY ARAB LEADERS THAT EVEN FOR TOTAL ISRAEL WITHDRAWAL YOU WOULD AGREE ONLY FOR NON-BELLIGERENCY AND WOULD LEAVE THE QUESTION OF PEACE FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.

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I BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST MOVE FROM WAR TO PEACE SHOULD INCLUDE NON-BELLIGERENCY.

THAT IS ISRAEL'S POSITION.

Q. ... ARE YOU RULING OUT SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATIONS?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE PAST PROVED IN OUR AREA THAT SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATIONS HAVE LED SOMEWHERE, AND THEREFORE, THE BEST WAY IS TO DEAL WITH EACH COUNTRY ON THE ISSUES THAT DIVIDE OR MAINTAIN THE COMMON SITUATION.

Q. ... DO YOU RULE IT OUT?

A. WELL I PUT IT THIS WAY, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IT IS ADVISABLE.

Q. MR. PRIME MINISTER, DOES PRESIDENT FORD AGREE WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT THAT IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO HAVE SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATIONS?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE PROPER FOR ME TO DISCLOSE WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID TO ME ON THIS ISSUE.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: DID YOU ASK FOR \$7.5 BILLION NEW MILITARY AND HOW MUCH DID YOU GET?

A. WELL FIRST, I HAVEN'T ASKED FOR THE SUM THAT YOU MENTIONED.

I HAVE ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF DELIVERIES OF ARMS TO ISRAEL TO MAINTAIN THE KIND OF BALANCE OF POWER THAT WILL ALLOW ISRAEL TO NEGOTIATE FROM A STANDPOINT OF STRENGTH, AND TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO US TO DEFEND OURSELVES, BY OURSELVES.

WE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE AND WE HAVE DISCUSSED A LONG TERM, TOO.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: IS THIS PRESIDENT LESS ENTHUSIASTIC UNCLASSIFIED

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THAN PRESIDENT NIXON ABOUT SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL?)

A. NO, IT'S NOT TRUE.

I HAVE HAD MANY TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT, AND I BELIEVE THAT HE IS COMMITTED TO PURSUE THE POLICY.

I KNOW HIM FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS AN AMBASSADOR AND I HAVE ALL THE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS ATTITUDE WILL BE CONTINUED BY THE UNITED STATES.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: DID YOU UNDERSTAND THE QUESTIONS WERE ABOUT SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATIONS, NOT MULTILATERAL?

A. I UNDERSTAND. I SAID, IT IS NOT ADVISABLE.

Q. (PARAPHRASE: DID YOU DISCUSS POSSIBLE TALKS WITH THE PALESTINIANS?)

A. WELL, IN THE MEETING WITH DR. KISSINGER THIS ISSUE WAS RAISED, AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT I HAVE TO REPEAT THE ISRAELI POSITION. WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR, AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE UNITED STATES POSITION, PLEASE REFER TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT. KISSINGER

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